

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the priorities, misguided priorities, of the Democrat majority in the Senate.

So far this year, Senate Democrats have ignored the most important issues that are facing our country. Democrats are focused on cramming through Joe Biden's radical leftwing nominees.

Looking at the Senate floor, you would think that everything is going well in the world and well across the United States. I have news for Joe Biden and for CHUCK SCHUMER: People all across this country are not happy. The country is heading in the wrong direction.

In meeting after meeting in Wyoming last week, as I traveled the State, people talked about sky-high prices, the sky-high debt that we have as a nation, and China's spy balloon.

Under Joe Biden, America is in crisis—inflation crisis, energy crisis, crime crisis, and a spending crisis.

Inflation went up again in January. The numbers came out Friday. The headlines don't lie. They said inflation remains entrenched—entrenched—and that is what people are feeling all across the country.

In addition to inflation, drugs are pouring across the southern border, killing record numbers of people, even in my home State of Wyoming. When the numbers are like they are in Wyoming, that tells you every State is a border State.

Crime is out of control in Democrat strongholds in cities like Washington, DC. We see it here. We see yesterday in Chicago, the mayor didn't even make it through the primary process—didn't finish first, didn't finish second, not even in the runoff. And according to people I have talked to from that State and watching the news reports, the No. 1 issue is crime; the No. 2 issue is crime; and the No. 3 issue is crime.

Internationally, Chinese President Xi Jinping is reportedly going to Moscow. Why? Well, to strengthen his ties with Vladimir Putin.

The list goes on and on of failures and crises that this administration is facing and, for the most part, has caused and created. Democrats are doing nothing to deal with it.

There is a lot we should be doing in the U.S. Senate. We should be unleashing American energy. We should stop the reckless tax and spending that the Democrats continue to promote. We should secure the border. Stop this flow of illegal drugs. We need to crack down on the criminals who are terrorizing communities. We need to put China on notice. Yet the Democrats are disinterested and ignoring it all.

Senate Republicans are going to force a vote today that will actually help people. We are going to vote to protect America's retirement savings accounts.

The American people know that Joe Biden continues to spread lies about

Social Security and Medicare. If Joe Biden is so concerned about people's retirements, he needs to look in the mirror. The only politician meddling with people's retirements is Joe Biden. That is right. The only politician actually meddling with people's retirements is President Biden.

The Biden administration wants retirement plan managers to invest people's retirement funds based not on the best return for the money—nope—but based on woke ideology. Democrats want this so they can funnel trillions of dollars to their climate elites.

It is called ESG: environmental, social, and governance. The more accurate name might be "extreme socialist greed." Now, this is going to rob American people of a lot of money. ESG is legalized theft from American workers.

Numerous studies have shown that these woke investments are bad investments. People wanting to maximize their savings and their investment and the investment income to benefit their families long term are being held hostage by these new regulations coming out of the Joe Biden administration.

Bloomberg analysts looked at these numbers of the people who invest in this ESG. What did they find? Well, they found that the return for the ESG investments fell way behind the general market—way behind. Year after year, that means less money growing in your retirement account.

This is a slap in the face to the working men and women of the country who are trying to save for their future. I am proud of the State of Wyoming because we have actually sued the Biden administration to stop this.

Retirement accounts are not for promoting a political agenda. They are for helping people retire with money in the bank. They are about giving people some safety, some security, and peace of mind. If woke investors want to promote a political agenda, then they should do it with their own money, not force investors to do so. The only people who benefit from ESG are the climate elites and the professional activists. Everyone else loses money.

Now, let me point out that the analysts from Bloomberg not only said that the return is much less but that the expenses of investing in those programs, with the management fees, is much higher. So you get hammered at both ends: lower returns and higher expenses.

ESG means you can't invest in things like oil, gas, coal, American energy. It means less American energy for people in our country. It means higher energy costs. It means fewer energy jobs and less money in people's retirement accounts.

This is an all-around disaster for the American people, but it is what the Biden administration and so many Democrats want. Democrats know the American people would never vote for this; it would never become law. That is why the Democrats attack American energy through the bureaucracy and

through the courts, through their wealthy friends on Wall Street.

Now, Democrats have friends on Wall Street who have been doing their bidding for years. A couple of examples: Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Chase, Wells Fargo, Citibank. They refuse to finance oil and gas projects near the Arctic. Citibank refuses to fund coal mining. HSBC refuses to fund any oil, gas, or coal projects.

The American people need to remember this next time Democrats say they oppose the big banks. Democrats and the big banks are practically joined at the hip.

Citigroup won't give a loan to a coal company, yet Citibank is happy to do business with China. Some Chinese companies have higher ESG scores than American companies. These include Chinese companies using slave labor.

This tells you ESG is a scam by the radical left. Now, Joe Biden wants the ESG scam at every bank in America—every bank, every savings account, every investment. That would mean trillions of dollars funneled to politically driven, woke investments. People who have saved their entire lives under this Democrat scheme would actually retire with less money in their accounts.

So I am going to join all of my Republican colleagues today to vote to stop this. Republicans are ready to stand up and say no to Joe Biden and the administration and this reckless policy. No more command and control from Biden's bureaucratic bullies, no to defunding American energy, no to woke corporations, and no to Democrats meddling in people's retirements.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

EMISSIONS REGULATION

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, my colleagues are here today to shine a light on the Biden administration's obsession with unhelpful and unnecessary regulations. We know that excessive redtape devastates our economy, and it harms communities. That is why the President's agenda needs to be stopped, and we can do it right here in the U.S. Senate.

I have introduced legislation this Congress to push back against the administration's misguided rule intensifying emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles.

In my home State of Nebraska, 1 in 12 people are employed by the trucking industry, making it the third largest industry in our State. In the United States as a whole, over 3 million people work as commercial truckers, and American truckers transported almost 11 billion tons of freight in the year 2021. Consumers all across the country rely on trucking to bring goods to markets quickly and affordably.

Truckers play an essential role in our communities and our economy, but the Biden administration doesn't seem to agree with that fact. Instead, our

President routinely chooses to prioritize excessive environmental regulations over people's livelihoods.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the Environmental Protection Agency's recent rule establishing stricter emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles. The Biden administration—well, they want to saddle hard-working drivers with an onerous regulation that is going to increase vehicle costs and is going to deal a serious blow to good-paying jobs. This aggressive EPA rule will hit mom-and-pop truck operations the hardest. For trucks to be compliant with the new overregulation, it will be cost prohibitive for small business owners.

Don't get me wrong. Nebraskans—over a quarter of whom work jobs related to agriculture—care deeply about environmental stewardship, but the EPA's emissions rule wouldn't actually accomplish its stated purpose of cleaning up our environment. The EPA itself estimates that the technology required to meet this new rule's standards will cost between approximately \$2,500 and \$8,500 per vehicle. This means that many truckers will choose to keep their old heavy-duty vehicles, which do have higher rates of emissions, instead of buying vehicles that are both affordable and more climate-conscious.

During a period of high inflation and supply chain disruptions, the last thing this country needs is more expensive freight costs and fewer truckers. Congress needs to vote to overturn this excessive rule—one that will hurt both the transportation sector and consumers at large.

The bottom line is that we have an obligation to stand up and push back against out-of-touch, far-left policies. I appreciate the work so many of my colleagues are doing toward this goal.

Senator BRAUN is leading the charge to overturn the President's new environmental, social, and corporate governance rule on retirement funds. The Biden administration should not be playing games with Americans' hard-earned money like this.

My friend Senator TUBERVILLE is pushing back on the administration's Veterans Affairs rule that would funnel taxpayer dollars toward abortions.

As Senator CAPITO shared earlier, she is leading us in resisting the Obama-era WOTUS rule implemented late last year. The WOTUS rule, which I have been fighting since my first term here in the U.S. Senate, is the Federal Government at its worst. It encroaches on families, on communities, and on businesses by its brazen intrusion into States' precious water resources.

The Biden administration has a track record of prioritizing politically charged regulations over the financial and economic well-being of Americans. My colleagues and I are here to stop these rules from taking effect on more and more Americans' lives before they damage the livelihoods of even more Nebraskans and more Americans across this country.

As long as I have the honor of working in the U.S. Senate, I will continue to oppose radical, far-left rules and promote commonsense solutions instead. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle should join me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator YOUNG and I each be able to speak for 5 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, last year, Senate Democrats used the budget reconciliation process to pass the Inflation Reduction Act. They did this without a single Republican vote. Included in that monstrosity was an \$80 billion payday for the Internal Revenue Service—more than 6.5 times the amount of funding the IRS would normally receive in any given year.

After this happened, I had a lot of Tennesseans ask me: Why does the IRS need that much money? Many of them are really fearful that the IRS is going to come after them and their small businesses. And you know what. They are probably right.

The Biden administration insists they are going to use this \$80 billion to help the IRS answer the telephones because they are only answered about 20 percent of the time, but we know that it means more audits for small businesses, small business manufacturers, and Main Street merchants. This administration has never once passed up an opportunity to expand government power, and they aren't about to stop now. We know this expansion will lead to needless harassment. That is the nature of Big Government.

But I am equally concerned about the sheer amount of data the IRS has scraped up during investigations. The IRS already collects far more data than they need. In 2022, they hired a contractor to block taxpayers from accessing government services unless they handed over sensitive biometric data. They already have your name, address, and Social Security number, but now they want to collect a picture of your government ID, your fingerprints, and a selfie photo. Why in the world would we allow the IRS to collect this data? The answer, of course, is that most people wouldn't let them have it if they had a choice. But the IRS wants to force this on the American people.

To make matters worse, we know that they are completely incapable of protecting the data they have access to. Let's just take a moment and look at some of the instances where the IRS has shown their disregard for your data security.

In 2015, hackers exposed more than 700,000 taxpayers' Social Security numbers. In 2017, the IRS notified Congress that hackers had accessed more than

100,000 Federal student aid accounts. In 2021, the infamous ProPublica leak unlawfully exposed financial information on many prominent Americans. In 2022, the 990-T leak exposed the sensitive info of more than 100,000 taxpayers not once but twice.

But even on a good day, the top men at the IRS have refused to prioritize data security.

They still haven't responded to inquiries I made about what security protocols they implemented as part of their "work from home" policy.

The IRS should be collecting the minimum amount of information required to do their job, and they should be doing all they can to protect your information. Instead, this Agency has a giant flashing sign out front inviting hackers to browse their files. These bad actors already know the IRS is vulnerable, and we will not be able to control that threat until the IRS abandons its latest power grab and prioritizes data security.

This is what the Biden administration needs to focus on before it spends 80 billion taxpayer dollars harassing the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

INFLATION

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, in recent weeks, the Biden administration has reassured Americans that our economy is historically strong and that their policies are the reason why. But far away from the White House, most people, I have to say, are unpersuaded. The cost of their bills and the state of their savings simply don't match the rosy picture that the administration presents.

There is a reason the rhetoric of this administration is so disconnected from the reality. This administration claims it is investing in America's economy, but, at the same time, it strangles our economy with unnecessary and ideologically motivated rules and regulations.

Just ask Hoosier farmers. The latest in their deluge of redtape, the rewritten waters of the United States rule, will make it much harder and significantly more expensive for our farmers to help feed the rest of the world.

Look at what they have had to navigate over just the past few years: a global pandemic, a supply chain stoppage, inflation, and the increased price of inputs.

In an industry that is so fundamental to America's prosperity, where margins for generations have been razor thin, why would we create even more uncertainty for our Nation's farmers? Because the priorities of environmental ideologues in Washington, DC, are evidently more important to this administration than the needs of the people who actually work the land—the people who provide our food supply.

This isn't part of an agenda that helps Americans. No, it is a bare-knuckle attempt to expand the reach